

Continuation of Substance of Interview including description of the general nature of what was discussed: The Examiner proposed the enclosed claim amendments to place the case in condition for allowance and to overcome the references to Shen and Choa by providing a mixture that is at least about half alumina combined with sintering temperatures that are higher than those typically used in spark plasma sintering of alumina. Applicant's counsel agreed to the proposed amendments.

Art Unit: 1732

Proposed
EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with

*** on ***.

1. The method for the preparation of a cutting tool insert having a sintered alumina and silicon carbide whisker composite material body, comprising the steps of

[-] milling and mixing powders of alumina and silicon carbide whiskers;

[-] forming said mixture into a preformed workpiece;

[-] heating said workpiece at a heating rate of from about 20 to about 60°C per minute by applying electrical energy in the form of a DC current that at least partially goes through said workpiece to a sintering temperature of between from [about 1600] 1800 to about 2300°C; and

[-] holding said workpiece at said sintering temperature for a holding time of from about 5 to about 60 minutes at a pressure of between 20 to 100 MPa,

wherein the proportion of silicon carbide whiskers in said composite material is from about 5 to about 50 % by volume and said alumina grain size in said composite material has a 80th percentile (P80) of less than 2.5 µm.

Art Unit: 1732

Claim 2 has been cancelled.

In Claim 3, replaced "claim 2" with --claim 1--

In Claim 4, replaced "claim 2" with --claim 1--

Claim 19 has been cancelled

In Claim 20, replaced "claim 19" with --claim 1--

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claim rejections set forth previously under this section are withdrawn in view of the persuasive arguments drawn to the rejection of Claim 2 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, on page 7 of the remarks filed 14 September 2006.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: ***.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."